

Q. #1526

51

Evidentiary Document No. 5085.

IN THE MATTER OF JAPANESE WAR CRIMES AND
IN THE MATTER OF KUALA LUMPUR CAMP MALAYA.

A F F I D A V I T.

I P 31600 Laurence, John William, SEEKINGS, of the 2nd Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment, with permanent home address at 55, Kneesworth Street, Royston, Herts, make oath and say as follows:-

1. I arrived at KUALA LUMPUR camp on February 1 1942 and remained there until the camp was closed, at the end of the second week in October 1942. The senior officer (British) was Colonel HARTIGAN of the Royal Chertwal Rifles, Indian Army. He handed over later to Colonel FITZPATRICK of an Indian Army unit. The camp interpreter was Major O.B.A. North of the 3/17th Phobra Regiment.

2. KUALA LUMPUR was apparently used by the Japanese as a collecting centre for allied prisoners who were captured in Malaya. In February 1942 about 250 British prisoners were accommodated there; by April strength increased to about 700.

3. Accommodation for British other ranks consisted of a compound about 40 yards square, officers were put into what was formerly the female ward of KUALA LUMPUR prison. Accommodation was very cramped and all ranks had to sicep literally shoulder to shoulder. The female ward was a building inside the compound, and the whole camp occupied a portion of KUALA LUMPUR gaol. As a result of many protests the Japanese allowed us, in March, to use a small room in the prison for the sick. In April we were given a wing of the prison and the use of the prison hospital. In May we were handed over the whole of the prison and from that time accommodation was satisfactory.

4. Food consisted of rice only, together with an issue of salt and drinking water which we got from the main water supply in the prison. This food was very inadequate and remained so despite the later addition of a small issue of green vegetables at the beginning of September. By that time officers began to receive pay from the Japanese which enabled them to purchase food from outside the prison. British other ranks had received working pay during this period but this was insufficient to purchase enough food to make the Japanese army issue up to an adequate quantity.

5. During the first 3 months the death rate among the prisoners was 10% and about 166 men died; most of these cases were battle injuries and men suffering from fever and battle exhaustion. The Japanese provided no bandages, no medicines and no medical attention whatever. The only equipment in our hands was what we were able to buy secretly through local inhabitants.

6. I do not know who the Japanese commandant was when we entered the camp but until May as far as I recall the camp was in charge of a Japanese serjeant. After that date Lt. MIZUTANA (spelled phonetically) took over.

Evidentiary Document No. 5085.

2. *

This man was responsible for our rations being about one quarter under weight. We succeeded in securing the Japanese ration scale for prisoners of war, and weighed such food as we received and checked it against this scale. When we complained to MIZUTANA the scales were tested in his presence. They were found to be correct and were promptly impounded by MIZUTANA.

7. The Japanese interpreter was a civilian employed by the Japanese Army by the name of TANAKA (spelled phonetically); this man on the whole was co-operative and helpful. British officers were not forced to work but British other ranks were employed daily from about 0900 hours till 1800 hours in various jobs including collecting scrap metal, repairing bridges and assisting in the Japanese supply dumps and they received pay for this work.

8. When the camp was closed in October 1942 the camp adjutant, Captain Anthony Gardner of the Loyals took the camp records to CHINGI. I do not know what happened to them.

SWORN by the said Laurence John)
SEEKINGS at 6 Spring Gardens in) (Signed) J.W. SEEKINGS.
the City of Westminster this)
Tenth day of January 1946)

Before me,

(Signed) O.G. MASON
Captain.
Legal Staff.

Office of the Judge Advocate General,
LONDON, S.W.1.

I certify that this is a true copy of the original affidavit.

(Signed) RDL KELLY
Legal Staff.
Office of the Judge Advocate General.

Certified true copy of original affidavit.

18th April 1946.

(Signed) R.B. LAMBE, Lt.Colonel.
AAG War Crimes. HQ ALFSEA.